

office he was then to perform, he imagined, it would be as little agreeable to their honour, to take the opinion of a slave, as it would be with his condition to offer it; but that this might be obviated and their dignity preserved, by making him free. This they allowed was highly reasonable, and immediately treated about the price of his liberty, and ordered the money to be paid to his master. *Xanthus*, tho' loth to part with *Æsop*, now found that he could not avoid it, and therefore making a virtue of necessity, rather chose to present *Æsop* to the commonwealth than to sell him, which the *Samians* were highly pleased with, and the council having returned their thanks to *Xanthus*, *Æsop* was presented with his freedom, on which he addressed them as follows,

' I am persuaded that it is scarcely necessary
' to tell so many wise men, that the Eagle is a
' royal bird: this bird therefore signifies a great
' king, and his dropping the ring into the
' bosom of a slave, who has no power over
' himself, is to let you know that you will
' lose your liberties, if you do not take a
' proper care to preserve them. Some po-
' tent prince has a design against you, and
' who

' who should this be, but *Cræsus* King of
' *Lydia*, who, you are sensible, is preparing for
' some great enterprise.' The council thank-
ed *Æsop* for the caution he had given them,
and then dismissed him.

A short time after *Æsop*'s prediction was justified by the event; for Ambassadors arrived from *Cræsus*, who demanded of the *Samians* a tribute for their master, and threatened them with an invasion in case of their refusal. This affair being debated in council, the majority were rather for peace with slavery, than for running the hazard of war with so powerful a prince. However, they resolved not to come to a determination till they had first consulted *Æsop*, who gave them his thoughts in words to this effect: ' You have two parts before
' you, said he, one of which must be taken :
' the path of liberty, which is indeed narrow
' and rugged at the entrance, but will prove
' plainer and smoother the farther you go ;
' the other is the path of servitude, which,
' though it seems easy at first, you will find
' afterwards most rugged and filled with in-
' supportable difficulties.' The *Samians*, at these words, unanimously declared for liber-
ty,